THE BRADBURY-SULLIVAN LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER'S

WORKING FOR YOUR RIGHTS EVERY DAY!

VALLEY GAY PRESS

SINCE 1998

THE GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY & BERKS COUNTY GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, & TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY NEWS & OPINION PAPER

VOL. 19 NO. 1

FINAL ISSUE - SPRING 2016

WWW.BRADBURYSULLIVANCENTER.ORG

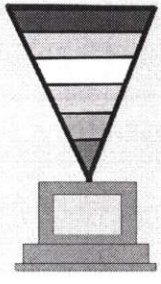
BRADBURY-SULLIVAN LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER OPENING CELEBRATION - SAT. APRIL 9TH

COMMUNITY IS INVITED!

Celebrate the opening of the greater Lehigh Valley's LGBT Community Center! Be there for the starstudded gala ribbon cutting and tours of the fabulous 13,000 square foot facility. Doors open for the public opening at 1pm., ribbon cutting: 1:30pm. Don't miss this historic event!!! The Center is located at 522 West Maple Street at the corner of Law and Maple, between 5th and 6th streets, and Hamilton and Walnut streets, right behind 520 Hamilton St. Parking garage next to the Center is free (enter from Walnut btw 6th & 5th)(graciously paid for by Centro Restaurant) during this event, .

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Leadership Award Winners Announced! Awards Celebration date set for June 8th and will be in the beautiful Willow Tree Grove banquet hall .

Read all about it and for ticket info see page 6.



AFTER 18 YEARS THIS IS THE LAST PRINT ISSUE OF THE VALLEY GAY PRESS

LIZ OUT LOUD *By Liz Bradbury*

By Patricia Sullivan

AFTER 18 YEARS THE VALLEY GAY PRESS IS COMING TO AN END

In 1998, I decided to create this paper to help rally the LGBTA community to pass the addition of sexual orientation and gender identity to Allentown's anti-discrimination ordinance. We didn't have social media then. Few people even had email or cell phones. But Steve Black, Trish, and I had been running PA-GALA, the LGBT Eastern PA political organization that had produced the LGBT Voters' Guide, for about 3 years, so we had a 40,000 name LGBTA mailing list.

We'd been called by two people on the Allentown Human Relations Commission to help them pass the ordinance addition, but they had absolutely no plan how to do so. Getting people to know what was going on, and especially getting them to go to the City Council meetings, was essential.

I'd been writing a regular column for a local LGBT magazine produced by Mitch Hemphill, called Above Ground, and Mitch showed me the software he used before he stopped production. We bought a new computer, a scanner, a big laser printer and for the first 6 years ,Trish and I paid out of our own pockets to print the paper, that often went out to 10,000 homes. PA-GALA paid the mailing costs in those days. In short, after a huge amount of work, which is another story, we passed the non-discrimination ordinance in Allentown, in 2007 we helped Easton pass theirs, we helped Reading pass theirs in 2009, and finally we circulated information about Bethlehem passing theirs in 2011, with Adrian Shanker leading that effort.

Allentown's passage of a fully inclusive anti-discrimination ordinance was a major change in PA. No ordinance had ever been passed with gender identity in it, and until that date only six PA municipalities had S.O in their laws. After the passage, a cascade of fully inclusive passages began. Today 34 municipalities have such laws, this timeline wouldn't have happened without the Valley Gay Press.

At the time of the first publication I also felt the community desperately needed a newspaper to circulate the important information about events they were putting on, because event date conflicts were becoming very serious. Then as now, there were dozens of local LGBT organizations. FACT, had already been around for ten years, and Pride was five-years-old. One year the Pride Festival and one of FACT's largest annual outdoor fundraisers, were scheduled on the same day. Tempers flew, but it really was no one's fault. There was no community calendar of events, until the VGP.

Because we had no advertising, I was able to cram 60 to 80 articles and columns into each issue. We've reported key LGBT stories that other newspaper didn't even mention. Every step of the passage of the non-discrimination ordinances, the progress of marriage equality was covered. How officials voted on legislation, or signed anti-LGBT petitions. AIDS/HIV issues, the Hate Crimes Bill, Transgender support, immigration stories, deaths, triumphs, weddings, public school discrimination, college ratings, political candidates, instances of LGBT discrimination in stores and restaurants, Roses and Raspberries, etc. And with investigative reports we were able to make change. We got many corporations to offer domestic partner benefits or change policies by writing about it in the VGP. One time I got a national pizza chain to remove the words, 'as required by law" from their non-discrimination policy by telling them that there was no national or local PA law that required LGBT non-discrimination. I got a national bookstore to drop a policy that LGBT youth magazine sales be more restricted than sales of non-LGBT youth media. I read and edited every column, I compiled and fit everything in, and wrote two to five columns in every paper.

When we began, we had more original column content than any other LGBT publication in this part of the United States. We had 8 different columns by real local writers, when Camp Rehoboth's newspaper only purchased syndicated columns, rather than having original material (this was before the brilliant Fay Jacobs began her Rehoboth column). The Philly Gay News was the only other paper for hundreds of miles with actual original reporting. All other papers had so much advertising that information was limited to a single story or part of a story per page.

And we had really wonderful columnists. The current writers for the paper are my dears. They write concisely and well on interesting topics, with hardly any editing on my part. And many columnists who have appeared in the VGP in years passed, have been simply, brilliant. To current and past columnists: I love you. Thank you for doing your homework and getting me stuff on time for every issue. Your work made this paper great and unique.

Highlights, Roses, and Thanks, a timeline, and just one Raspberry: We've had 24 columnists over the last 18 years. Besides those featured in this issue: Others have included: William Fetterman, Phd. who wrote about Gay artists and writers in 20 papers, beginning in 1999. Denise McKelvey, who wrote about LGBT community investing and personal wealth management in every issue from 1999 through 2008. Travis Simmons - A 17-year-old student living on his own, who wrote 5 investigative articles in 2000, about discrimination against LGBT youth (and who is now a successful fiction author). Distelfink Comix which I drew, that began in 1998 and ran 4 years. Attorney Kate Lynn, who wrote

LIZ OUT LOUD CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

TRISH'S COLUMN

It's All About Getting Information to the Community

Eighteen years ago Liz started the VGP because she was committed to provide information on issues and events that affect the community and bring us together. The very first issue alerted and rallied our community to a threatening anti-gay piece of legislation that we ultimately defeated.

The GLBT infoline and the website Resource Pages were also created by Liz. The Resource Pages is a site where businesses that are GLBT owned or GLBT friendly can list their services. Those pages contain over 400 listings. It's the largest up-to-date list of GLBT resources in the State.

Liz will continue to answer the GLBT Infoline,(610-432-5449), responding to questions about services and events and assisting GLBT people experiencing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Liz has answered this line 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays, since it was established. I believe the GLBT Infoline is one of the most important services we've provided over the years and it has served thousands of people.

The VGP may be ending, but my wonderful spouse's determination to keep our community informed will continue.

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LIZ OUT LOUD CONTINUED

about LGBT legal issues for two years, beginning in 2008. A'Ja (Lyons) Lyve, who began in 2009 writing books reviews, and then wrote her 100 Word Rant from 2009 to mid-2015. Brandon Pariser - who wrote Health Up! for 6 issues, beginning in 2013. And Kathleen Prime who wrote The Blind Truth in 2015. All these columns were great additions to the paper and had many followers eager to read their information and wisdom. Many thanks to all of you! If I left anyone out, I'm sorry, please remind me.

Planet Parenthood began in the very first issue with a column by pediatrician, Dr. Elizabeth Goff, who is also a mom. A baby photo of one of Elizabeth's wonderful daughters, whom she was about to adopt from China, appeared in the second issue This daughter is preparing to go to a great college in the fall. Cecilia Stevenson wrote Planet Parenthood from 1999 through 2000. Laurie Rose wrote from 2000 to 2001. Carolyn Lewis, Phd wrote it from 2001 to 2004 (see a new column from her on page ___) And Donnie and Earl Snyder wrote it from then on. All these columnists are parents and wrote the column brilliantly. Special thanks to Donnie and Earl for 12 years of sweet, funny, beautiful, informative pieces that told potential LGBT parents all about open adoption and raising a baby boy into a terrific 12 year-old.

Pop Quiz began in 1999. I usually wrote it, but occasionally had our wonderful college interns be the quizmaster for that issue. I'd ask them what they knew everything about and have them write it about that. Hence quizzes about The L-Word, Amy Winehouse, Key West, and American Horror Story. Surveys have indicated that 50% of the VGP readership read the quiz immediately after the first page - you know who you are.

What's that About began in the second issue in 1998 and has run for 18 years. I wrote all the WTA columns answering questions from the community about LGBT issues and using it as the investigative reporting article.

Liz Out Loud began in 1999 as ""A View From a Dyke" which I thought was a clever pun based on the title "A View From a Kill" (BTW - Kill means creek, Bushkill Falls etc) and using the word dyke, because its origin - from Boudica (Boo-dike-a) the heroic, fierce British-Celtic Queen warrior who fought the Romans in 1st Century AD and is believed to be the heroic source of the word 'bulldyke'. But after years of having to explain that the word Dyke is not pejorative, I changed the column title to Liz Out Loud, which had been coined by Mitch Hemphill the publisher of Above Ground, as the the title of my column when I wrote for that magazine in the 1990s. In my column I wrote about civil rights issues, elections, Roses and Raspberries, funny, happy and sad things, and stuff the community needed to know. I also wrote WTA, the Quiz, many of the other articles that were about our, or other organization's events. I also took nearly all the photographs. I can say honestly, that I'm probably the only person in the community who read (and edited) every single word of every issue of every paper, and often two or three times.

Special editions of the VGP included a huge Who's Who of the community with over 100 photos and bios, two issues that covered the our local delegates Steve Black, and Donna Crucianni at Democratic conventions, and an extensive survey of readers.

Patricia Sullivan began writing her "Trish's Column" in 1999, it featured simple explanations of conplex LGBT legal and rights issues. She often spent days researching them, so we all would have the best, clearest information. They brought us a fascinating array of LGBT topics including aging issues, American religious statistics, property deeds, employment law, anti-LGBT incidents of fraud... every column brought information you'd want to quote or share with others. Trish also helped proofread every paper AND FOR 18 YEARS, MANAGED THE ENTIRE MAILING FROM ADDRESS LIST TO LABELS TO PAYMENT, FOR EVERY SINGLE ISSUE!!! TOGETHER WE WENT TO THE PRINTER FOR EVERY ISSUE, STOOD THERE WHILE IT WAS PRINTED AND STUFFED THE ENVELOPES ON SITE, THEN TOOK THEM DIRECTLY TO THE POST OFFICE FOR MAILING. TRISH DEALT WITH THE COMPLICATED BULK PROCESS EVERY TIME, MAKING SURE THE ENVELOPES GOT TO INDIVIDUALS AND THE DROP OFF POINTS. I could NEVER have done this paper if Trish hadn't been so fabulous and capable in doing the jaw-droopingly complicated mailing of every paper. You have NO IDEA how hard it was, but as an illustration consider how many other local LGBT organizations do huge frequent mailings to perfectly up-dated lists that are managed in house? There were times we printed, stuffed, and mailed 4000 envelopes and dropped off papers to a dozen stops in one 6 hour period. Thank you, my beloved Patricia Sullivan for bringing this newspaper to the community for 18 years.

Steve Libby began writing his brilliant pop culture column Rants and Raves in July 2002 and hit his stride immediately and is still nailing it 14 years later. His work is smart, funny, and chic. He even made us cry with moving articles about love and loss. His ability to write with brevity and amazing speed is astounding and joyous. One time I called him and said, "Steve I need your column." He said, "Oh I forgot, I'll do it now"...and he sent me a wrongful funny piece ten minutes later. Thank you Steve, not only for your wonderful writing, but for being a driving constant creative force in the community for decades!

Scott Laubner also began his column in July, 2001 as "Scotts Says". When Scott moved to New York City in October of 2007, the title changed to Scotty in the City. Scott's very accessible column dealt with things like supermarket cruising locally, and shifted to a peek into New York Gay Life, included being a member of the NYC Gay Men's Chorus, volunteering with the LGBT seniors org SAGE, and helping out with the Broadway Cares flea market. Scott just graciously wrote us that his VGP writing inspired him to get out and investigate new things for his columns. BTW, Scott was the very first openly Gay appointed official in the City of Allentown, nearly 18 years ago. We covered that in the VGP too. Thank you Scott, for your vivid and lively articles, that made us feel like we were there, learning new things about LGBT life.

LIZ OUT LOUD CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

LIZ OUT LOUD CONTINUED

Sun Sneeringer — In 2006 PDN received a grant that allowed us to expand our distribution into Berks County, add another 4 pages to the paper, mail to hundreds more people and take on a new columnist from the Reading Area. Sue began writing "Sooz Views" at that time and as a skilled author and playwright, covered the LGBT Arts and issues community brilliantly. She's continued to cover culture, political, and family issues with the same clarity and eloquence for ten years. Thanks, Sue for your excellent writing from a thoughtful perspective in nearly 80 columns!

Also in 2006 I contacted fabulous national cartoonist Nicole Hollader, whose syndicated "Sylvia" comics had run in over 150 national newspapers for over 20 years. Her syndication in Tribune papers had ended, and her cartoons had never been regularly seen in the Lehigh Valley area, so I asked her for permission to run earlier strips in the VGP. She graciously agreed. Trish and I were able to meet Nicole, who is based in Chicago but was doing a tour in Floida, last year. We're very lucky to have had the progressive feminist comic "Sylvia" in the VGP for ten years! Thanks so much Nicole!

In 2007 Phil Healing began his column "A Little BIT of Healing" which then alternated with Scott's column every other issue. Phil's wonderful evocative prose narrated the journey he and his husband Kindall Goble took to the UK, where they relocated because the US did not legally recognize their relationship for immigrations purposes. Phil has written from England about LBGT issues there, and also about art, theatre, music, and general life across the pond. How lucky we are to have had his columns, not just for the international insight, but to be able to keep up with our dear friends Kindall and Phil. Thanks so much, Phil for your beautiful columns.

Adrian Shanker began his column in 2007. Beginning with "Faith Pages" that covered LGBT faith and spiritual issues, and progressing to an events, advocacy, civil rights, and community center issues column in a broader format, Adrian also contributed many news articles. Thanks so much to Adrian, for his help with the paper's production, including his successful effort in securing underwriters that covered the production costs in the last 3 years. No one else could have done that!

Thank you also to the all the PR people from all the groups who sent me information to put in the paper for every issue. And especially to those people who wrote short direct press releases that I didn't have to edit! The one Raspberry I just have to blow is to anyone who continued to ignore my constant request to write press releases in 3rd person format.

Finally, I'm proud that, we managed successfully to have a broad balance of LGBT issues. The VGP was never just from the Lesbian point of view, or the Gay male point of view, in the way other narrow publications can be.

We started the paper to pass LGBT laws and get information to the community, and we achieve success for 18 years. Here's to the Valley Gay Press!

OVER 200 DIFFERENT PEOPLE, HAVE PUT IN OVER 2000 VOLUNTEER HOURS TO PAINT, CLEAN AND FIX UP THE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER TO BE READY FOR OPENING.

GLBT SUPPORT GROUP IN BERKS COUNTY

Sancuary Counseling in Douglassville, is an affirming, confidential experience of community and support. Sanctuary Counseling provides affirming counseling for the LGBTQ community, it's located for clients in Northern Chester, Southeastern Berks, and Western Montgomery counties and the Route 422 corridor. 515 Old Swede Rd. Douglassville, Berks County. 610-385-3155 sanctuary counseling.com. The Douglasville site is a VGP Drop-Off spot.

**LGBTQ Youth group: ages 14-18, meets twice a month, $40/month (time/days TBD)

**LGBTQ Young Adults group: ages 18-24, meets twice a month, $40/month (time/days TBD)

**Current LGBTQ Adult group (closed): first and third Mondays of the month, $50/month. (New groups forming, time/days TBD)

**All potential participants should contact Sanctuary to indicate their interest and schedule a pre-meeting consult.

Therapists have experience with Transgender clients.

READING PRIDE CELEBRATION CALENDAR

This year, on July 17th is Reading Pride Celebration's 10th Anniversary 2006 - 2016.

Monthly General Meetings are held at Kreative Corner, 505 Penn Street 4th Floor, Reading, PA. See the Reading Pride Celebration Facebook page for dates and times. All are welcome but guest presenters please call the President at 610.375.8209.

LGBTQ TEEN GROUP SPECTRUM IN READING

The SPECTRUM meetings offer positive role models, peer support, education, and recreation for LGBTQ youth and their allies. All participants will be ages 14-20. Meetings take place Wednesday evenings from 5:30-7:30. See: www.facebook.com/the.spectrum.berks for more information.

WE THANK NATIONALLY SYNDICATED SYLVIA COMIC ARTIST AND AUTHOR NICOLE HOLLANDER, WYOU CAN FOLLOW NICOLE ON HER HILARIOUS DAILY BLOG: BADGIRLSCHAT.COM.

Special thanks to Nicole Hollander, for allowing us to run her nationally syndicated progressive, feminist comic "Sylvia," in the Valley Gay Press, for ten years, for free.

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SOOZ VIEWS by Sue Sneeringer

CONVERSATIONS

Conversation at family gatherings during an election year can be tricky. Get one of us started and the rest either chime in or take a seat and watch the fireworks. So, Easter and there's a cousin and, well, don't you know "Donald Trump is gonna get elected and doesn't matter anyway because it never matters who's president and blah, blah, blah..." And I chime in that America's a democracy, not a business, and then I'm shouted down with, "you'll see, he'll be elected and it won't matter because Congress is a bunch of jerks and, hey, it would be better for me if Bernie Sanders got elected but it's gonna be Donald Trump and you just wait and see…"

Thing is, we weren't really disagreeing about anything except his absolute certainty that La Donald would win (do they still have an inauguration when your crowned CEO In Chief or do we just go right to the board room and start firing people?). Things went back and forth for a while until I suggested he'd feel differently about everything if he was a woman or gay or a person of color or, well, anything but a white male. Yeah, I went there.

Because even though that cousin doesn't really want Trump to be president I have at least two others who would burn a book or two in celebration of it. Looking out at that sea of a borderline slightly psychotic crowd at Chicago a few weeks ago I saw a lot of white guys looking pretty pissed off at the brown and black people there daring to dissent and I'm not breaking a big news story here when I say we need to be really concerned about that.

If there's anybody out there who thought Trump was a serious candidate in the beginning I hope you wrote it down and locked that piece of paper in a time capsule. I'm still not convinced he will be the GOP nominee but only because I still don't think he wants the actual job. But he's stirred the pot convincingly for sure, enough so that sane people are actually thinking Ted Cruz is an alternative. And I guarantee that if you're a woman or gay or any "other" there's no question you should be terrified of that.

At this weekend's family gathering I never really even voiced my preference. I'll be voting for the Democrat, whoever that is, tainted Hillary (only the most battle-tested ready-for-the-job-Day-One candidate ever) or Saint Bernie (honestly, does this man have a plan or will his being so right about everything make it all magically happen?) and breaking out the rosary daily between now and November that some sanity will be restored.

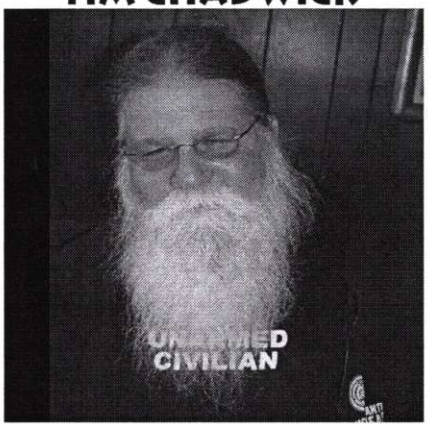
As for those hot topics at family gatherings, at least for a little while, well, there's always baseball.

Sue has been writing her column since 2006, thanks Sue, for over 60 great columns!

COMMUNITY MOURNS MATT STITZER

Matthew Stitzer died on January 21, surrounded by loving family and friends. He was an actor and avid supporter and fundrasier of local theater, participationg in many productions at Civic Theatre, PA Play House, and Theater Outlet. He was a founding member of FACT and supported FACT for 30 years. The entire community feels his loss and will miss him every day. A memorial honoring Matt took place at Civic Theatre on March 19th.

COMMUNITY MOURNS TIM CHADWICK



Tim Chadwick died suddenly, earlier this year, from complications from surgery. Tim began working for and generously supporting, the local rights of the LGBT community as a team captain during the fight against a referendum to remove Allentown's anti-discrimination law. He served with LGBT organizations: PFLAG, PA-GALA, PDN, MCC, and Pride. He also was an active member of the peace organization LEPOCO.

2016 LGBT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS JUNE 8

Join us at the beautiful Willow Tree Grove banquet hall in Orefield, PA for the 2016 LGBT Community Leadership Awards, honoring:

Mark Albright, Esq.
Mary Lisicky
Ariel Torres
Gross McGinley, LLP
Muhlenberg Trans* Advocacy Coalition
Women's 5k Classic

Featuring Keynote Speaker:
Carson Kressley, Fashion Designer

Event includes: buffet dinner, assorted cupcakes from Sweet Girlz Bakery, live music, photobooth, one complimentary Stoli cocktail, silent & live auction, basket raffle, and special appeal (contact adrian@bradburysullivancenter.org to donate an auction item)

Corporate sponsorship opportunities, which include program advertising, are available: www.bradburysullivancenter.org/sponsorship. Sponsors include:

Gold Sponsor: PPL Corporation
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BRADBURY-SULLIVAN
LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER
Serving the LGBT Community of the Greater Lehigh Valley

2016 LGBT COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS

JUNE 8, 2016 • 5:30-8:30 PM
WILLOW TREE GROVE • OREFIELD

Honoring:
Mark Albright, Esq.
Mary Lisicky
Ariel Torres
Gross McGinley, LLP
Muhlenberg Trans* Advocacy Coalition
Women's 5k Classic

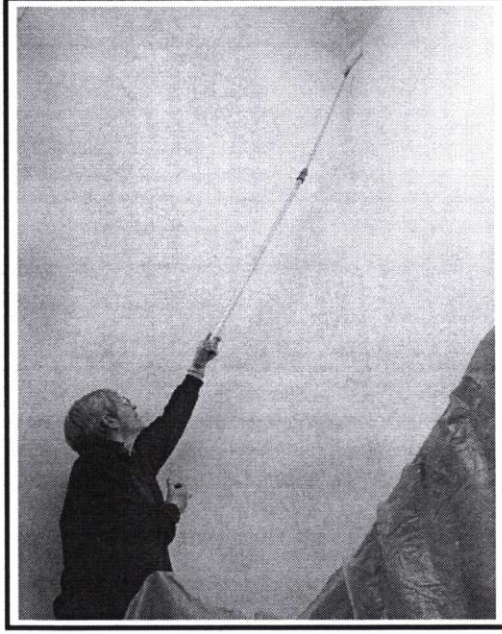
Featuring Keynote Speaker:
Carson Kressley
Fashion Designer

Advance tickets required
$50 - Individual
$75 - Host Committee (Friend, 1 ticket)
$125 - Host Committee (Supporter, 2 tickets)
$250 - Host Committee (Advocate, 4 tickets)
$500 - Host Committee (Leader, 6 tickets)
$1,000 - Host Committee (Co-host, 10 tickets)

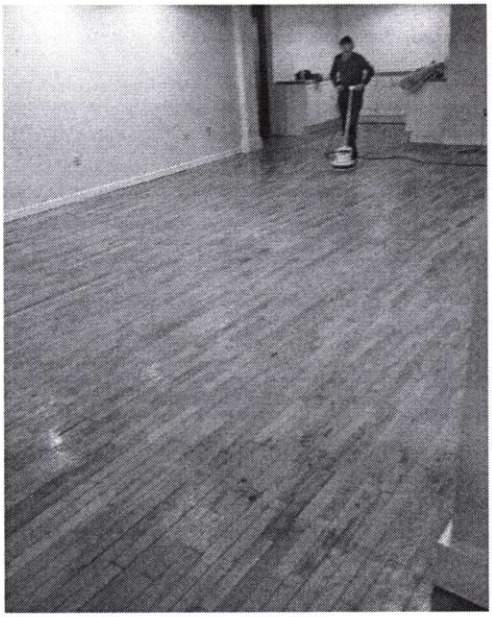
Event includes: buffet dinner, assorted cupcakes from Sweet Girlz Bakery, live music, one complimentary Stoli cocktail, silent & live auction, basket raffle, and special appeal

Advance tickets available at bradburysullivancenter.org/events

Sponsorship and program advertising opportunities available at bradburysullivancenter.org/sponsorship



At right: Liz Bradbury painting the 25 foot walls with a 20 foot pole, in the stairwell of the LGBT Community Center. At left: Trish Sullivan buffs the hard maple floors on the second floor of the LGBT Community Center.

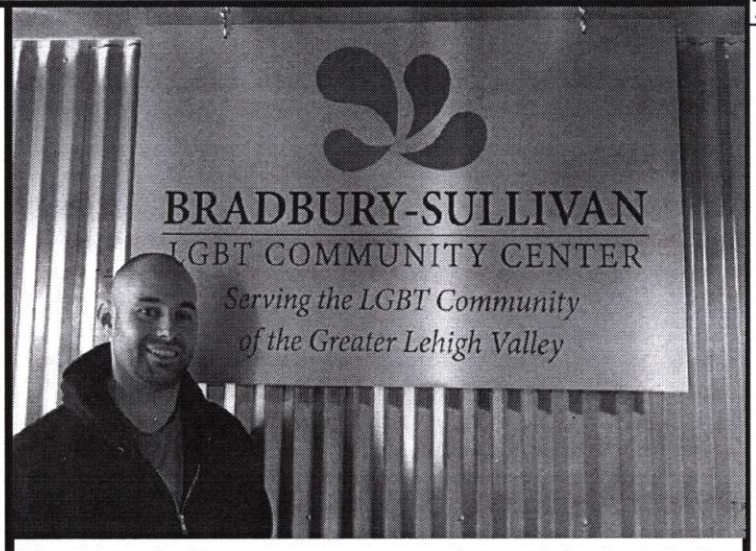


RANTS & RAVES BY STEPHEN T. LIBBY

HERE'S TO THE FUTURE!

All I have are raves re writing for the Valley Gay Press for these many years. Liz and Trish are the best bosses to work for. Not only do they not get upset when my column is late…they expect it! The VGP has been one of the most important venues for LV folk to receive the news that no one else was printing. Liz, Trish and Adrian have been at the forefront of the passing of every piece of legislation that has help propel the LV forward to insure equal rights for all in every facet of daily life. We take for granted they will be there to push and argue and fight for equal rights in housing, employment, marriage etc. And they also put on one hell of a party with the Annual Awards Banquet where they toast and recognize individuals and groups who also donate time, energy and money to support the good cause. It's bittersweet to be writing this for the last print issue of the VGP. But, along with Liz & Trish, I look forward to their next chapter with the soon to open Community Center! Bravo and here's to the future!

STEVE HAS BEEN WRITING HIS COLUMN SINCE JULY 2001 --- THANKS FOR OVER 130 GREAT COLUMNS!



The Signs By Tomorrow company donated the installation of the Center's new indoor sign and donor plaque.

NEED INFORMATION, LGBT FRIENDLY REFERRALS, OR ADVOCACY BECAUSE OF DISCRIMINATION? CALL THE BRADBURY-SULLIVAN LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER INFO-LINE - 610-432-5449

Cohen, Feeley, Altemose & Rambo has served the legal needs of residents from the Lehigh Valley and Northeastern Pennsylvania for over 30 years.

We are proud to support the Bradbury-Sullivan Center and all the members of the LGBT Community!

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www.CohenFeeley.com

Underwriters of this issue of the Valley Gay Press is the Law Firm:

COHEN, FEELEY, ALTEMOSE, RAMBO

Planet Parenthood

donniearlucas@msn.c
by Earl & Donnie Snyder

TWELVE YEARS AND COUNTING

It is hard to believe we have been writing this column since 2004, the year that we became parents. With this being the last issue of the Valley Gay Press we will surely miss writing this column regularly as it covered the journey our family has taken so far in the past twelve years.

Our journey into and through the realm of parenthood began with our decision in 2002 to complete our family with the adoption of a child. At that time it wasn't extremely common for a family to be comprised of two gay male parents, at least in this area, of which we were aware. We fortunately found a very LGBT friendly agency who worked hard with us to adopt our son. In 2004 we jointly adopted our son, Lucas, at the age of 1 month, in the state of New Jersey. He was an energetic biracial baby and we were two very inexperienced gay dads. It was the start of a wonderfully diverse family that has been an exciting adventure ever since.

Making decisions on child-raising, child care, discipline, health benefits, work hours, babysitting, play dates, education, sports, recreation, and religion became priorities to us as they do for most new parents but with a slightly gayer angle- how will other kids, parents, teachers, coaches and so on react and will they give our child and us the same respect as anyone else? Who will claim the child for taxes, who will provide health benefits, when will they offer a family plan for us? With a little extra effort we managed to make it past any obstacles.

As time passed we encountered more families with two moms or two dads. It provided a wonderful networking experience. We started online communication groups and eventually PA Diversity Networks Rainbow families. With that we enjoyed quite a few fun recreational events where kids bonded, parents chatted, and connections were made. Eventually we encountered similar families in church, school and community settings. It was really good to see the increased diversity and the acceptance of it becoming more common, although not always without some intense activism on the part of many LGBT organizations such as the PDN.

Now Lucas is twelve years old. He is a healthy and happy pre-teen kid who loves playing football and other sports, has his share of academic struggles with his schoolwork, is extremely social and outgoing, always willing to help the underdog or someone in need, but just as willing to get himself into some mischief in order to have a little extra fun. Just like most kids his age he keeps us young and ages us rapidly at the same time. To sum it up, he is quite happy. We are happy. But time is moving so fast and we are trying to enjoy every moment of it, now at twelve years and counting. Thank you all for allowing us to share it this way. Thanks Donnie and Earl for over 100 great columns in the VGP!

PLANET PARENTHOOD FAIRWELL - BY FORMER PP COLUMNIST CAROLYN LEWIS

A hundred years ago, or maybe it was only 5 minutes, I contributed some articles for Planet Parenthood. My kids were both school-age and I struggled with the things all single parents or co-parents navigate, complicated only a little bit by my newly realized orientation. I even wrote about my daughter outing me to her entire class and all their parents on visitation day when she stood up and announced very proudly, and very non-contextually, "My mom loves a girl!" Now mind you, my kids are extraordinary, and they gave me very little trouble. Seriously, they were great and I was very lucky because I sure made some mistakes along the way. But I'm getting ready to take my son, the youngest, on a college tour in a few weeks and I realize soon he'll be out of the house and my role as a parent will change again very dramatically. Gone are the days of packing lunches, never ending "sign and return" paperwork, lost shoes, and play date dramas. Communication with them is also very different. Hollering up the stairs has been replaced by cell phone calls. Or, rather, I call and they don't pick up. They text back "what?". Really? You couldn't answer the phone?

So all of this got me thinking about my journey as a mother. As a lesbian mother. I used to worry so much about how my orientation would negatively impact their lives. Granted, there were some kids who weren't allowed to come to our house, and there were a few instances of name-calling, but the ride hasn't been nearly as bumpy as I thought it would be. Maybe we were lucky. Maybe times are changing. Maybe it's a bit of both. But what I can say is that my kids turned out ok, none-the-worse for wear. I didn't ruin their lives. I didn't scar them permanently. I want to tell that younger version of myself to relax and enjoy the ride. My daughter, who identifies as bisexual, and my son who identifies as "Ohmygod Mom, for the millionth time I'm straight already" are both just fine. Better than fine, in fact. They're awesome.

****Editors note: Just before Carolyn took over the Planet Parenthood column, she was the victim of severe employment discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. She returned to school, got a doctorate, and began a new career. She is now Carolyn Lewis, PsyD, Exec Director of a mental health agency in Bucks County.**

LGBT Community Center Library Volunteers Judy Arendt and Kathleen Kapila, who have cataloged over 1100 books and media in the Center's Library.

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ADRIAN SHANKER COMMENTARY

OPENING THE CENTER

Photo by Marco Calderon

As we prepare to open the LGBT Center on April 9th, I'm thinking back on the last two years since we announced this vision and asked you, our community, to join us in making this dream a reality. This Center is a true community collaboration. Our founding donors helped us get our vision for the Center off the ground. Our pro-bono design team saved us significant up-front costs enabling us to save our funds for when we really needed them. Our initial capital supporters made it possible for us to make our down payment. Our financing team secured the mortgage and our volunteers helped prepare the building for the opening. The Center isn't just about a nice building, it's about the programs and services we'll offer now that our community has has a space to call our own. It's about space to celebrate LGBT artists. It's about space for an LGBT community library. It's about space to promote LGBT health. It's about space for LGBT organizations to have their meetings. It's about creating a strong and vibrant LGBT community for the future. That's what you helped us accomplish. What we have done together is not easy and it wasn't an inexpensive endeavor. But it was, and is, worth it. Our community needs and deserves an LGBT community center -- I'm appreciative of every dollar that was donated and every volunteer hour contributed to make this dream a reality. As we transition past our grand opening, we'll soon announce the initial programs we are launching at the Center. And we hope to see you at the grand opening ceremony & ribbon cutting on April 9!

Adrian Shanker is the Founding Director of the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Center and is the former President of the Board of Equality Pennsylvania - the largest LGBT Legislative Advocacy Organization in PA.

APRIL FOLLIES - A BENEFIT FOR THE SPECTRUM YOUTH GROUP

Join the CABARET All-Stars for the 6th Annual APRIL FOLLIES Benefit Variety Show to benefit the SPECTRUM LGBTQ Youth Group of Planned Parenthood Keystone. Saturday, April 2 at 7 PM, LouisLong Gallery at GAPS, 128 N 5th St, Reading,PA

CFO of Olympus Corporation world headquarters in Center Valley, Pierre LaCroix, who stopped by to paint the LGBT Community Center along with a large team from Olympus's LGBT Employee Group.

VALLEY GAY PRESS MASTHEAD

VGP IS PRODUCED BY THE BRADBURY-SULLIVAN LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

PUBLISHER, MANAGING EDITOR -- LIZ BRADBURY

MAILING -- PATRICIA SULLIVAN

COLUMNISTS: LIZ BRADBURY, PATRICIA SULLIVAN, DONNIE SNYDER, EARL SNYDER, STEPHEN LIBBY, KATHLEEN PRIME, SCOTT LAUBNER, SUE SNEERINGER, ADRIAN SHANKER, PHIL HEALING, A'JA LYVE, KATHLEEN PRIME AND OTHERS

Valley Gay Press - The Lehigh Valley and Berks County's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Community Opinion and Newspaper (VGP) operates as a program of the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center. VGP owns the copyright to its articles and columns. No part may be reproduced without written permission of the Publisher. VGP offers free copies for direct mail and hand-out distribution to area not-for-profit organizations & businesses. The editorial columns, articles, & cartoons that appear in the Valley Gay Press express the opinions of the authors & do not necessarily reflect the opinion or attitude of this publication. VGP makes no indication of the sexual orientation or gender identity of persons, organizations, or businesses mentioned in any issue.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE VGPS FOR HAND-OUT DISTRIBUTION:

Metropolitan Community Church LV, PFLAG Pottsville, Civic Theatre of Allentown, Many Libraries in Berks County, Allentown Main Library, Planned Parenthood NEPA, Allen HS GSA , SPECTRUM, Kutztown Univ GLBT Center, Reading Area Community College Library, Many High School & College GSAs.

BUSINESSES WITH VGPS FOR HAND-OUT DISTRIBUTION:

Diamonz Nightclub -- 1913 W. Broad St., Bethlehem
Stonewall Bar -- 28-30 N. 10th St., Allentown
Candida's -- 247 N. 12th St., Allentown
The Woods Campground
Sanctuary Counseling -- 515 Old Swede Road, Douglasville
Rainbow Mt. Resort - 210 Mount Nebo Rd. E. Stroudsburg

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TO CONTACT VALLEY GAY PRESS:
MAIL TO:
PO BOX 22902 LEHIGH VALLEY, PA 18002 610-432-5449
LIZ@BRADBURYSULLIVANCENTER.ORG

Volunteer team of the Lehigh Valley Secular Humanists, pulling up the old rug in the LGBT Community Center's community room.

THE SECOND ANNUAL
LGBT BUSINESS COUNCIL
GALA
SAVE THE DATE
5-21-16
SILVER CREEK COUNTRY CLUB

HAVEN

HAVEN MEETINGS : The LGBT social and support group for teens ages 14 to 20, meets every Wednesday from 7:00 - 9:00PM at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 424 Center Street, Bethlehem. Meetings are open to GLBTAQI youth ages 14 - 20. havenyouthgroup@hotmail.com.

GLOSS

The GLBT Organized Sports Society (GLOSS) offers indoor & outdoor activities throughout the year. New members are always welcome regardless of skill level.

For more up to date information look for GLOSS on Facebook and Meetup under GLOSS Sports & Recreation. Also, check out the website at www.gloss.org.

GLOSS has an email newsletter that will keep you updated on all their events. GLOSS is always looking for people willing to be activity leaders. If your favorite activity is not listed, they will help you organize an event or outing by promoting it in the newsletter and social media.

For more information email Info@gloss.org.

BRADBURY-SULLIVAN
LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

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?WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

CONTACT "WHAT'S THAT ABOUT" EDITOR LIZ BRADBURY WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT GLBT ISSUES.

RECENT QUESTIONS ASKED, CALLED, OR EMAILED TO THE BRADBURY-SULLIVAN CENTER...

FYI: YOU CAN LEARN ALL ABOUT THE UPCOMING PROGRAMS OF THE BRADBURY-SULLIVAN LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER AFTER THE CENTER OPENS, BY FOLLOWING THE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER'S FACEBOOK PAGE AND ITS WEB PAGE AT WWW. BRADBURYSULLIVANCENTER.COM. --SEE PHOTOS OF MANY OF THE VOLUNTEERS WHO WORKED ON THE CENTER, AT THE OPENING ON APRIL 9.--

FROM RIGHT- ATTORNEY TIFFANY PALMER, BARB BAUS, AND ATTORNEY BEN JERNER

RECEPTION AREA OF THE BRADBURY-SULLIVAN LGBT CENTER DEDICATED TO BARB BAUS AND THE LATE CATHY BURGI BY THE LAW FIRM OF JERNER & PALMER.

INTERNSHIPS AT THE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

The Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center has a limited number of one semester or summer internships available for college or high school students seeking to complete volunteer (non-paying) internship requirements or get experience with an LGBT not-for-profit. Hours and time commitment are flexible. Our offices are located in Center City Allentown and Easton. For further information and to fill our an application please see www.bradburysullivancenter .org/internship_opportunities.

SCOTTY IN THE CITY

By Scott Laubner

First I have to thank Liz and Trish for the wonderful regular opportunity to write for all these years. I started writing for this paper in 2001. So many columns; What's left to be said? So much has been accomplished locally and nationally since I started. I enjoyed writing about life in the Lehigh Valley. When I moved to New York I asked Liz & Trish if they wanted me to continue. I was happy when they said yes you can be our New York correspondent.

Second, thank you my chipmunk readers for reading every issue. Did I ever tell you where that phrase came from? I saw Dame Edna Everage do her show in Philadelphia. She kept calling everyone in the audience her "possums." It made me laugh. It was so endearing I starting using the phrase "chipmunk reader" in my columns.

The last issue of Valley Gay Press? The Valley Gay Press is ending But with Steve Libby's new Gay Journal on the scene and the new LGBT Community Center in downtown Allentown, I'm reassure that nobody is going away. Maybe not so much an ending but just a transition.

I wish Liz and Trish and everybody good luck in all your future endeavors toward equality.

Scott Laubner is a native of Allentown who moved to New York City a few years ago.

SCOTT HAS BEEN WRITING HIS COLUMN SINCE JULY 2001. THANKS SO MUCH SCOTT FOR OVER 100 GREAT COLUMNS!

"A LITTLE BIT OF HEALING"

by Phil Healing

YOU, AND ME, AND US, AND YOU

To anyone who has read even one article in the VGP over the years: Thank you for witnessing what has been an achievement that most of us could barely dream of. I have only made small contributions to the paper over the past few years but have been immensely proud to be a part of something utterly groundbreaking and fearless in its goal. The VGP and the people who have made it happen, especially those at the top, make us all proud to be human beings. The VGP has seen some of the lowest and the highest moments of the fight to win equality for our family.

We're getting there. Marriage on a federal level is a phenomenal achievement, and there is no doubt in my mind it is because of People like Liz, Trish, Adrian, oh, I couldn't possibly list everyone but we are truly, truly thankful for your determination and courage. Remember, courage isn't about conquering fear. Courage is being afraid but going for it anyway.

I am sad to see the VGP change from a tangible form into an electronic form, but....well, if Doctor Who can do it, then.....It'll come back stronger, fresher, with an even sharper direction, and will raise the spirits and aspirations of new people who will get involved in what is an unforgettable ride.

So thank you; thank you to everyone who has had a hand in something truly magical. and we'll see you on the other side.

PHIL HAS BEEN WRITING HIS COLUMN SINCE 2007 - THANKS FOR 9 YEARS OF GREAT COLUMNS!

Phil Healing and his husband Kindall Goble formally lived in Allentown until the lack of US marriage equality and immigration rights forced Phil (who is a citizen of theUK) and Kindall to return to England here their relationship was legally recognized

Pop Quiz

By Liz Bradbury

VGP History Quiz:
1.In 1998, the VGP announced the pending resignation of MCC Pastor ___. (Bonus how many years did he serve?)

2. In an article I wrote in November 1998, I said: "Though Hawaii same-sex marriage isn't going to happen anytime soon, keep your eye on ___. (Which became the 1st state to legally recognize same-sex relationships in 2000.) A. MA B. VT C. NY 4. MD

3. The _____ Players acting troupe, led by Jerry Schmidt, announced frequent shows in the VGP in the 1990s.
A. Tin Pan B. Dangerous C. Queen City D. Enigma

4. Meetings of _____ , the LGBT women's social group, were announced in the VGP in the 1990s.
A. Kindred Spirits B. Gaia C. Sage Women D. Tejas

5. The "Distelfink" cartoon, appearing in every issue from 1998 thru 2002, featured a Horseyburger college student named Daphne, and her cat named____. A. Felix B. Puppy C. Dis D. Iggie

6. The very first regular column, _____, began in the first issue in April,1998, and has appeared in every issue from then on. (Hint: What's That About began in the 2nd issue)

7. Besides a story about the Allentown Anti-Discrimination Ordinance, stories about ____ and ____, groups that are still running today, ran on the first page of the first issue. A. FACT & GLORA
B. Pride & the LV Gay Men's Chorus C. ACCO & MCC D. HAVEN & PA-GALA

8. _____, a pot-luck style social group for people in greater Reading and Allentown, ran announcements in the VGP, in the 90s.

9. Throughout the entire publication of the VGP, _____, the LV sports oriented LGBT social group, has announced regular events including Ping Pong and Bowling.

10. The Jan-Feb 2000 VGP announced that the ____ would be on February 6th, followed by the first ___ on February 13th. A. first HAVEN prom, HAVEN meeting B. installation of MCC's Rev. Elizabeth Goudy, first Freedom to Marry Service C. FACT Snow Ball, FACT Bingo Night D. first Pride Board Meeting, Pride Oscar Night

11. In 2000, Steve Black was elected as an Al Gore delegate to the Democratic Convention in LA. In that VGP issue he thanked ____, Bev Morgan, and Dick Cowan for helping him gather signatures. A. Liz Bradbury B. Tracy Denton C. Trish Sullivan D. Allyson Hamm

12. The VGP announced that Steve Libby's film Through the Lavender Lens, would premiere on June 9th, 2000, during the Pride Film Festival in a theater at _____. A.Lehigh Carbon Community College B. Cedar Crest College C. Muhlenberg College D. Lafayette Univ

1.Peter Hait (9) 2.b 3.d 4.a 5.c 6.Planet Parenthood 7.b 8.GLORA 9.GLOSS 10.b 11.b 12.a

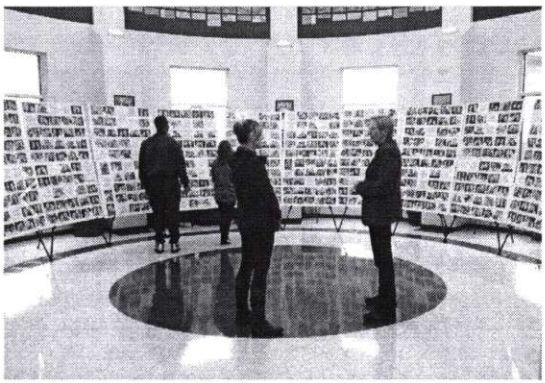
THE NEW LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER AT 522 WEST MAPLE STREET IN ALLENTOWN, WILL HAVE ITS OFFICIAL OPENING AND RIBBON CUTTING ON APRIL 9 AT 1PM.

PHOTOS OF THE MONTH

CANDIDA SWORN INTO OFFICE

Candida Affa won the election for City Council in Allentown last year, and was sworn into office, early in 2016. Candida, who has been the oweer of Candida's Bar for over 30 years, ran as an openly Gay candidate from the first day of her campaign.

Liz Bradbury presenting an LGBT cultural competency workshop to the entire Facutly of the Minersville School District, in Schuylkill County.



Liz Bradbury presenting the Same-Sex Couples Photo Project earlier in the year, at a series of exhibitions at 5 campuses of Delaware Community College.

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